Woman of FAITH MAGAZINE

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A PRAYER FOR THE HOLIDAYS

KINDRED SPIRITS

FINDING HOPE WHEN CHRISTMAS HURTS

ENTERING THE SECRET PLACE

"FIRST ONE TO SEE THE STAR WINS"

Cheryl Ann Watson

Shares her powerful testimony of

COURAGE, GRACE AND TRANSFORMATION

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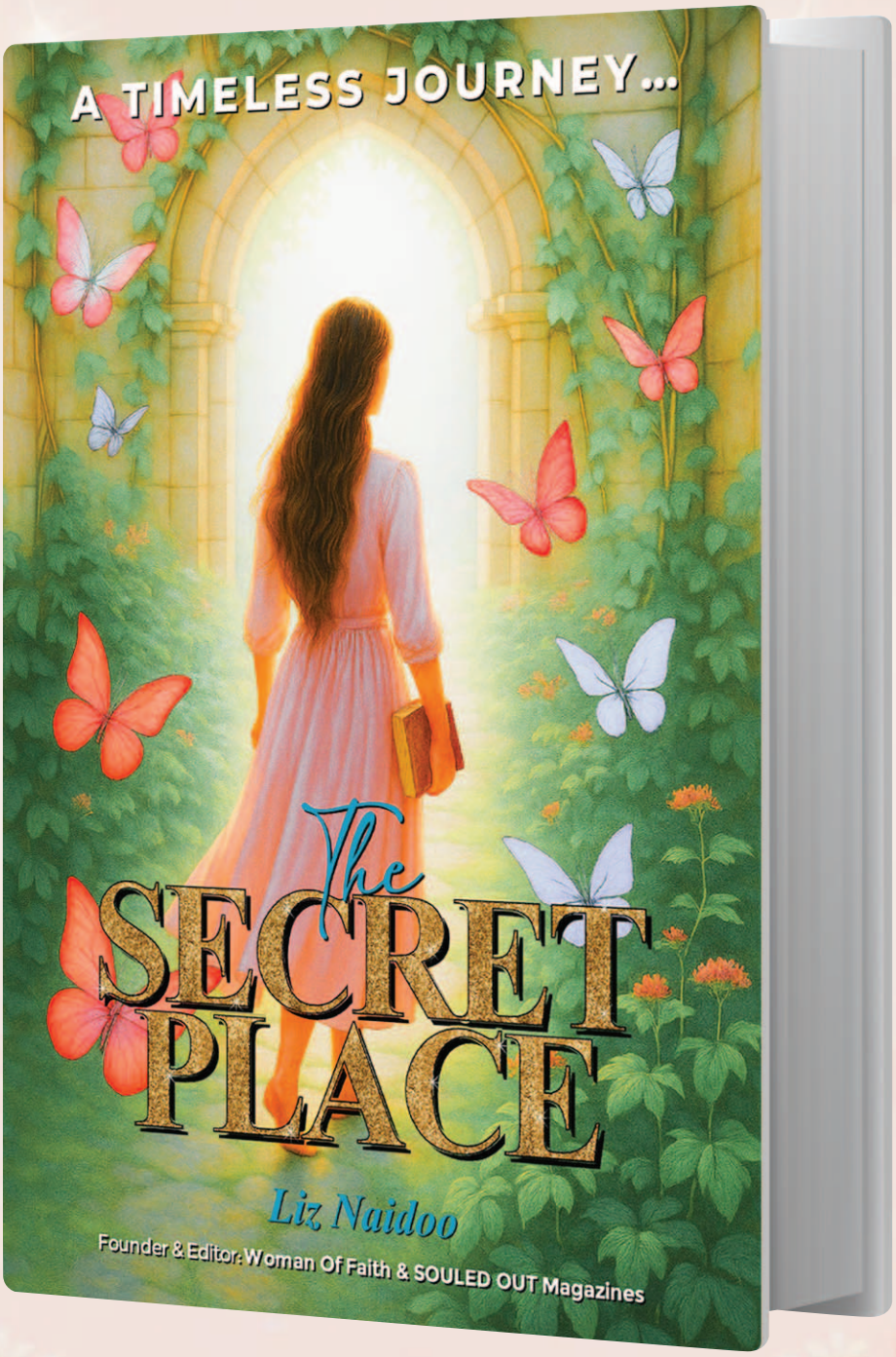


info@womanoffaith.co.za or
WhatsApp +27 83 312 9383

Cheryl Ann Watson

COVER FEATURE
17

Shares her powerful testimony of

COURAGE, GRACE AND TRANSFORMATION

12

11

8

REGULARS

THE EDITOR'S NOTE 5

LET US PRAY 6
A PRAYER FOR THE HOLIDAYS

DESIGNING WOMEN
BY LIZ NAIDOO 26
ENTERING THE SECRET PLACE

BEAUTY IN THE ASHES
BY CONNIE MANNERING 15
BE THE MIRACLE THIS CHRISTMAS

CHRISTIE AMOYO: LIFE OF FAITH 7
HEALING IS FOR EVERYONE AND EVERYTHING!

DATHA WILSON WHITFIELD:
FINDING MY PURPOSE 28
"FIRST ONE TO SEE THE STAR WINS"

NOW I SEE
BY JANET PEREZ ECKLES 11
FINDING HOPE WHEN CHRISTMAS HURTS

TALKING WITH TRESSA
BY TRESSA LEMKY 12
TRANSFORM OUR WEAKNESSES

ANGEL BROWN
DAUGHTER OF THE KING 14
CHRISTMAS MEMORIES AND FAMILY TRADITIONS

FEATURES

THIS CHRISTMAS SPREAD THE LOVE OF GOD LIKE ANYTHING 23

KINDRED SPIRITS 8

IT'S ABOUT THE BABY BORN IN A MANAGER! 30

28

23

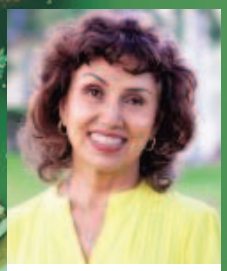
Writer/ Contributor

Liz Naidoo
EDITOR & FOUNDER
DURBAN, SA

Heidi Gibson
DURBAN, SA

Connie Mannering
ONTARIO, CANADA

Tressa Lemky
WINNIPEG, CANADA



Janet Perez Eckles
FLORIDA, USA

Christie Amoyo
WINNIPEG, CANADA

Angel Brown
ALABAMA, USA

Datha Whitfield
ALABAMA, USA

Dr Suryakumar Daimari
ASSAM, INDIA

PUBLISHER
Woman of Faith Publications

ASSISTANT EDITOR
Heidi Gibson

PUBLICATIONS EDITOR
Liz Naidoo

DESIGN AND LAYOUT
The Design Team

ADVERTISING & MARKETING
info@womannoffaith.co.za

COVER FEATURE
Cheryl Ann Watson
Durban, South Africa

COVER IMAGE
Dino Vieira
Durban, +73 471 2444
www.debcal.co.za

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Liz Naidoo	Durban, South Africa
Heidi Gibson	Durban, South Africa
Tressa Lemky	Winnipeg, Canada
Connie Mannering	Ontario, Canada
Christie Amoyo	Winnipeg, Canada
Janet Perez Eckles	Florida, USA
Datha Wilson Whitfield	Alabama, USA
Angel Brown	Alabama, USA
Dr Suryakumar Daimari	Assam, India

THANK YOU FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Cheryl What a joy to see your radiant presence gracing the cover of WOMAN OF Faith Magazine. Your strength, beauty and courage shines through the pages of your testimony, reminding us that faith is not just lived but seen in the lives of women who walk in grace. Thank you for lending your heart and your story to this milestone edition. Congratulations on the debut of your book, BROKEN YET CHOSEN.

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Editor's Note

Dear Friends,

As the year draws its final breath and the hush of December settles over our hearts, we gather once more, around tables, around shimmering trees, and around the sacred truth that God is with us.

This Christmas, we celebrate more than a season. We celebrate a Saviour who came into our world not with pomp, but with a whisper. A baby wrapped in swaddling cloth, His cradle was straw, yet He carried the weight of glory in the Highest. A perfect gift from God. Isn't that just like God, to choose a manger over a throne!

Here at *Woman of Faith*, 2025 has been a year of holy surprises. We've laughed (sometimes through tears), prayed bold prayers, and watched God move in ways that only He can. From our 10-year anniversary breakfast to the quiet moments of mentoring and ministry, we've seen the fingerprints of Heaven on every page, every gathering, every heart.

And now, as we unwrap this Christmas issue, may you find more than festive reminders and joyful reflections. May you find rest. May you find wonder. May you find yourself drawn back to **The Secret Place**, where surrender is peaceful and love is given freely.

To every woman reading this: You are seen. You are cherished. You are part of a sisterhood that spans continents and candles, laughter, and lament. Whether you're sipping cocoa in a bustling home or lighting a candle in quiet solitude, know this, Emmanuel – God with Us – has come into this world to pave the way for you.

This Christmas issue I am delighted to introduce **Cheryl Ann Watson**, a powerful woman of God as our cover feature. Cheryl grew up in the same city as me, she is an influential South African who has met Jesus through great trials. Her book, BROKEN, YET CHOSEN, is a must read.

Thank you, dear team and friends, for your help in raising the banner in 2025. Thank you, **Tressa Lemky, Heidi Gibson, Janet Perez Eckles, Christie Amoyo, Angel Brown, Connie Mannering, Datha Wilson Whitfield, Carmel Murugen, Julie Ramiah, and Leslie Ambrose Callaway**... not forgetting my amazing Design Team for amazing articles and stories, great layouts, and gorgeous covers, that brought glory to our Lord Jesus. To our amazing cover ladies for 2025, thank you.

Merry Christmas, beloved friends. May your days be blessed, your heart be light, and your spirit anchored in the One who still speaks through stars and shepherds.

Liz Naidoo

Founder & Editor,
WOMAN OF FAITH Magazine

Let Us Pray

by Liz Naidoo

A PRAYER FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Dear Heavenly Father,
The year is almost over, and I am reminded of Your goodness.
We lift our hearts in thanks, for the lights, the laughter, and the shared meals, but above all, I am thankful that even in the hustle and bustle all around, Your Presence is felt...
it is a reminder that you are near.

Bless our homes during this festive season with Your peace.
May mercy fill our hearts as we celebrate You. May we find You in that cup of tea shared with friends,
the dinners shared with family,
in the giggles of children running around, or even in a game of 60 Seconds.
May joyous laughter, togetherness and the love of family fill our hearts.

May this season be a sanctuary of hope and peace, where weariness melts into wonder, and hearts give cheerfully to the less fortunate.
May every person feel seen, loved and cherished.
Lift us up in Your care, may Your mercy be our portion.
We need You Lord to keep us safe during this Joyous Season.

We thank You Heavenly Father not just for Christmas, but
but for the New Year to come. Thank You for constant care.

In Jesus Name. Amen

Christie Amoyo
LIFE OF FAITH

Healing is for everyone and everything!

I was studying the Scriptures in the Bible about Jesus healing all the people He was with and instantly. My spirit was getting so stirred up and a fire was set in my heart for the healing power of God. I knew that God's power was flowing through me, His word said it! So, I walked outside my house and said to God that I would pray for the first person I saw. In my busy little neighborhood...no one was outside. Strange. But then my dog walked up to me. She had this large baseball sized lump on the side of her belly. That's it! I cupped that thing in my hand and commanded it dead at its roots, and to get out of her body.

A few weeks had gone by, and I remembered that I had prayed for her. From a distance I could still see the area where the lump was because the fur had started to stand out all around it, so I thought it was still there. I went up to her and tried to cup the lump...it was COMPLETELY gone!

A lady in my church just called me the other day and said she had remembered me sharing how I prayed for my dog. Her fish was looking like he was dying that morning, breathing weirdly on its side and not eating. She prayed and started to speak life over it. The next morning it was swimming around and eating its food!

Mark 16:18 NKJV-"...they will lay hands on the sick and they will recover"

Rom. 8:11 NLT- The Sprit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you.

Click on the link below to get a copy of Christie's book. Hidden Treasure, The Promised Child and more.

Christie Amoyo with her family: "From my home to yours, Merry Christmas and a happy New Year."

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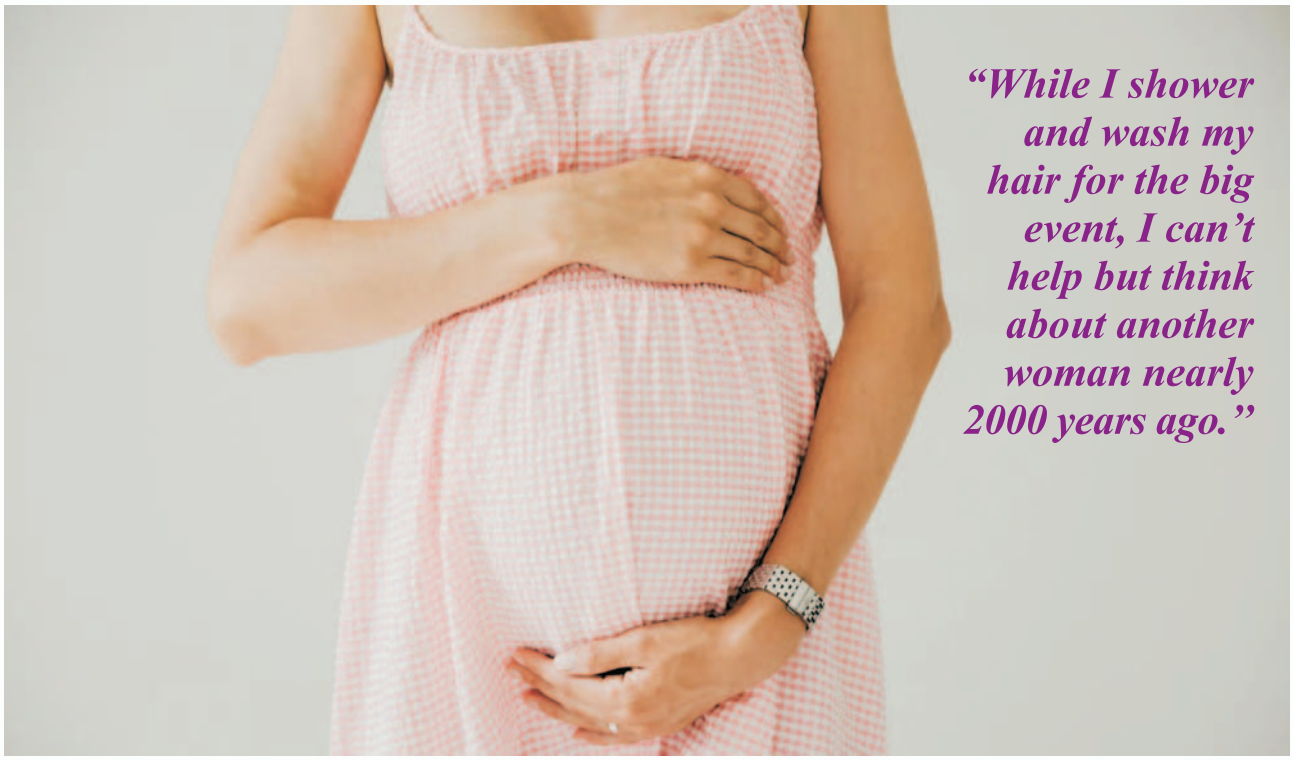
Kindred Spirits

By Linda Germain



"While I shower and wash my hair for the big event, I can't help but think about another woman nearly 2000 years ago."

Christmas Day 1984 dawns with bright sunshine. I wake up smiling with no clue how dramatically the next sixteen hours will unfold. I am eager to go to church and do my alto part in the choir. Those spacious robes hide the girth of this longed-for pregnancy, that glorious expectant state that fills me with joy and thanksgiving. As I begin to get out of bed it becomes more than apparent there will be no church for me today. It's about to be someone's birthday.

While I shower and wash my hair for the big event, I can't help but think about another woman nearly 2000 years ago.

You were so young, Mary, and no obstetricians were hovering over you the way they have been over me. Surely your female relatives were a source of information. It would not surprise me, considering your close encounter with angels and God, if you received perfect instructions on how to proceed. I wonder if you were as excited as I am.

Beth, the midwife who has followed me with an eagle eye, works with my physician, a kind man so appropriately named Dr. Love. My husband records every contraction on his clipboard. He calls Beth to report. She says, "I wondered which one of my ladies would get me out on Christmas Day." I feel like I have won the grand prize.

Was Joseph helping you and timing pains, or was it not socially acceptable for a man to be present? I don't want to think you were all alone in that barn place. On second thought...I have to remember yours was the most special case ever on the face of the earth and you must have been provided for in ways none of us will ever know until we see you in Heaven.

My mother-in-law, several states away, calls to ask her son if he is sure we have plenty of gas. She is worried we'll end up on the side of the road.

Sweet Mother of Jesus, you were riding on a donkey and made it just fine. I will be in our older model, but very comfortable, light blue Cadillac. I picture you as serene and trusting, ready to face the unknown and deliver the best gift ever given to mankind.

We arrive safely at the hospital and immediately I have to concentrate on the business of birthing. Wires and tubes are attached to me. Medication is administered into my spine, a procedure that pushes my spouse to a near-faint, but he soldiers on.

I wonder about the activity in that long-ago manger. How long did you suffer? Was there any kind of herb or mixture to ease the inescapable pain of childbirth? Oh, Mary, you precious girl. If I had been there, I would have rubbed your back and held your hand.

After what I consider unending torture, things move quickly. The stretcher seems to fly to the delivery room. Dr.Love appears out of nowhere. Someone is screaming. It turns out to be me.

"In humble surroundings, you were honored and loved. Wise men brought offerings. No one pushed you aside."

We are led to believe cattle were lowing and peace surrounded your delivery place. It must be true. Yours was such a special case, and you were attended by the GREAT PHYSICIAN.

I hear that first little cry from my brand-new son and I am consumed with more love than I thought existed.

I can only imagine what it was like for you, dear Mary.

After a brief introduction to my baby, I am wheeled into a corner until someone can take me to my room. In a moment of complete isolation, I beg the janitor, who is mopping the floor, to take this IV out. He declines. I weep.

In humble surroundings, you were honored and loved. Wise men brought offerings. No one pushed you aside.

In a few hours, I am pain-free and my handsome son is nestled in my arms. I drink in his sweetness with new mother disbelief. He is adorable, and to me, perfect.

You must have felt the same way. Your baby truly was perfect. He still is.

My tears are forgotten. I can't stop smiling and praising Mary's firstborn for my incredible miracle.

Mary, someday I will tell you how thankful I am for your obedience and sacrifice in the delivery of the King of Kings--a blessed gift to the world--the reason for this season.

And thank you, Jesus, for answering the prayers of a barren woman. This is, hands down, the best Christmas of my life. Amen.

"You must have felt the same way. Your baby truly was perfect. He still is."

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Now I See

by Janet Perez Eckles

Finding Hope When Christmas Hurts

It was Christmas time, and decorating was next on my to-do list. I retrieved three stockings—each embroidered with our sons' names: Jason, Jeff, and Joe. Once Jason's and Jeff's were hung, I clutched Joe's against my chest. Tears stung my eyes. The empty stocking mirrored the emptiness in my heart.

It had been five years since Joe's tragic death. Five years since laughter filled our home. Christmas no longer called for celebration. When a vital part of your heart is missing, joy feels hollow, and even twinkling lights seem dim.

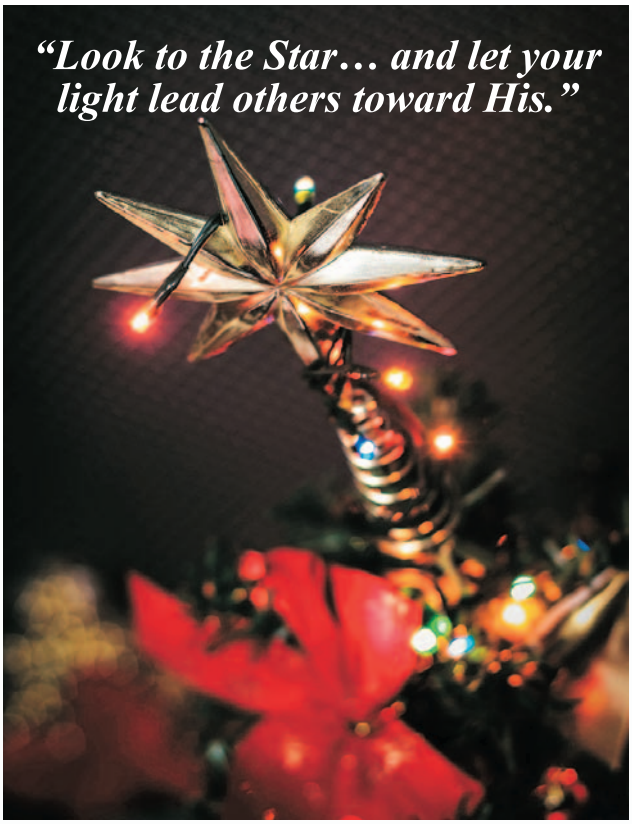
I wanted to erase every holiday—birthdays, Christmas, all of them. The world rejoiced, but grief had stolen my song. Yet, it's often through pain's deep ache that our eyes open to what truly matters.

My thoughts drifted back to when Joe and his two brothers were small, and I worked tirelessly for the perfect Christmas. Every light on the tree had to shine. When one bulb went out, I fussed, rearranged, and missed the beauty of the glowing star on top. How often I've done the same in life—focusing on what's broken instead of Who still shines above it all.

That year, with tears flowing, I whispered, "Lord, calm my heart." And He did. The star above the tree glowed brighter, reminding me that His light never fades—even in the darkest night of grief.

Now, when I hang Joe's stocking, it's no longer empty. It's filled with the warmth of his laughter, his hugs, his "Where's my favorite Mom?" Those memories are treasures no sorrow can erase. When disappointment carves holes in our hearts, God's presence fills them with His light. When sorrow clouds our days, His love whispers peace. And when fear grips our future, His promises shine as our guiding star.

Now, it's your turn. If the lights around you seem dim this Christmas, lift your eyes to The Morning Star. Let His brilliance steady your heart, dry your tears, and remind you that no matter what's lost, His hope still shines—steady, strong, and eternal. Look to the Star... and let your light lead others toward His.



Talking with Tressa

www.youtube.com/@tressalemky

Transform Our Weaknesses

Tressa Lemky

He said to me, **"My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness."** 2 Corinthians 12:9

God has given each one of us gifts and abilities. When we use those strengths, we are more likely to feel confident and secure. One of the gifts the Lord has given me is the ability to decorate and coordinate events. I have produced conferences, fundraisers, fashion shows, and weddings that have been, successful and well received. But despite those successes, I can tell you that without the Lord and His gentle steering, they would not have turned out as successful. His grace and goodness always come through for me at every event.

When I was 35, my doctor diagnosed me with a minor case of attention deficit disorder. I wasn't that surprised

"One of the gifts the Lord has given me is the ability to decorate and coordinate events."

Blessings and Merry Christmas from my Canadian home to yours, wherever that may be.

because when I was in school, it had always been difficult to concentrate and stay focused. Especially if I wasn't really interested in what I was doing lol. I was easily distracted, which made it difficult to complete assignments.

I asked the Lord to take my ADD away, but then I remembered, even though I had these tendencies, God had a way of always making up for them. In whatever situation I found myself in, things always seem to work out.

God has never left me to figure things out completely on my own, instead He faithfully brought whatever assistance I needed.

I actually felt closer to the Lord, because I knew that whatever I achieved, we had done it together. And what I found even more fulfilling was that I was able to share with others how God had helped me along the way. It showed that I didn't need to be concerned that I wasn't enough, because He was more than enough.

It's that solid confidence in Christ, and not my own abilities, that allows me to step into unchartered situations.

My hope for this Christmas, and of course, anytime of the year is that we get to know the Lord in a way that is so personal and so comfortable, that you can take Him into any future days.

He longs to be your helper, your comforter, and most of all your Savior.

Remember, God will never leave you or forsake you and *anything* that you bring to Him *He can restore and rebuild.*

He loves you, believes in you and wants to have a personal, daily relationship with you.

His presence in your life is the only "PRESENT" that really matters so this Christmas my prayer is that you will unwrap that beautiful gift from heaven above.

Blessings and Merry Christmas from my Canadian home to yours, wherever that may be.

ANGEL BROWN

DAUGHTER OF THE KING

Christmas Memories and Family Traditions

Christmas is one of my most favorite holidays. My parents and grandparents always made it so special for us four kids. It became a tradition for my family to spend Christmas Eve at our grandparent's home, and on Christmas Day, they would spend the day at our home.

My Nanny prepared for days to cook her signature Christmas meal: a turkey with homemade gravy, stuffing, a ham, cranberry sauce, sweet potato casserole with marshmallows, green bean casserole and a macaroni and cheese dish that was a family recipe. We all loved Nanny's cooking, and every dish was wiped out.

After that delicious meal, we all gathered in Nanny and Pop Pop's living room and opened gifts. There was excitement in the air! After we opened all the gifts, we would eat Nanny's homemade blackberry cobbler with blackberries that we picked from her bushes.

On Christmas morning, our parents made us sit at the top of the steps until our grandparents arrived and had a cup of coffee. Momma always made our traditional Christmas breakfast: scrambled eggs with cheese, bacon, toast, and orange juice. The anticipation of coming down those steps was always so exciting!

Momma would always have the house decorated with stars hanging from the ceiling, fresh wreaths on all the doors and Christmas trees in every room. Our house smelled so delightful. After our large meal, with our belly's about to pop, we all laid around watching Christmas movies by the warm, cozy fire that my daddy made for us.

Now that I'm raising my own family, I treasure the traditions that shaped my childhood and enjoy adding new ones to our story. I cook my Nanny's Christmas meal. We watch Christmas movies. Our family wears matching Christmas pyjamas. We have cinnamon rolls for breakfast, and the kids love the hot cocoa bar. I love to decorate with my collectibles from Germany. I love stars, lights, and beautiful Christmas trees.

"Now that I'm raising my own family, I treasure the traditions that shaped my childhood and enjoy adding new ones to our story"

As you celebrate Christmas, may you and your loved ones cherish old memories and create beautiful new ones together. May His Presence be the best presents in your home and may your hearts overflow with wonder as you reflect on the greatest gift of all: **Our Lord Jesus Christ.** Isaiah 7:14 **"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call Him Immanual."**

BEAUTY IN THE ASHES

by

CONNIE MANNERING

Be the Miracle This Christmas

There is something undeniably holy about the month of December. While the world rushes from store to store in the hustle and bustle of busyness, Heaven is quietly orchestrating moments—divine intersections where ordinary people step into extraordinary Christmas miracles. If your heart is open, God will position you to either receive a miracle or become one.

Christmas has always centred on giving. We celebrate because God first gave to us. "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son" (John 3:16). Jesus—the greatest gift ever wrapped in human flesh—entered a dark world to bring hope, healing, and salvation. That is why our hearts soften during this season. That is why generosity rises and that is why we must stay focused on the real reason we celebrate: ***Christ is Christmas.***

We also cannot ignore that for many people, December is the most difficult month of the year. Some are grieving family members who are no longer here. Some feel the weight of loneliness more deeply when the world around them appears joyful. Others are overwhelmed, stretched thin, or quietly hurting behind holiday smiles.

This is why sensitivity to the Holy Spirit matters so deeply. When God places someone on your heart—call them. Text them. Pray for them. Invite them. Bless them. Don't second-guess that nudge. You never know how one simple act of obedience can shift an atmosphere, lift a burden, or remind someone that God still sees them.

Scripture reminds us, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). Giving isn't always financial. Sometimes the miracle is a listening ear, a warm invitation, a ride, a meal, a coffee, or a simple reminder that someone is valued. When you pour out, God never fails to pour back in.

So, this December, be intentionally aware. Be prayerfully available. Look for the quiet needs, the hidden hurts, and the divine opportunities God places in your path.

If you're able to give, give boldly.

If you need a miracle, expect one joyfully.

Above all — Choose to be the miracle.

www.conniemannering.com

We celebrate because God first gave to us. "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son" (John 3:16).

Christmas is the one time of year when we can eat dessert for breakfast, wear sweaters that blink louder than our Christmas lights, and still call it holy fellowship. Truly, where two or three are gathered in His name there will also be one aunty telling the same story for the tenth year in a row.

Cheryl Ann Watson

shares her powerful testimony of Courage, Grace and Transformation

By Heidi Gibson

After a tumultuous youth that involved running with the wrong crowd, an early marriage and the birth of her daughter, Cheryl found herself at breaking point. She had just gone through a difficult divorce, and her daughter miraculously survived a traumatic accident, then to be told by her doctors that she had cancer! The doctors said she had malignant melanoma level 4, and they did not know if she had six months. Dying was not something she had contemplated at 26 years old.

One night Cheryl had come home late. She was unable to open her front door, something inside of her snapped! She just wanted to go to sleep and never wake up again. Feeling desperate she looked to see what she could take to ease her pain and the utter feeling of despair, but then found herself looking at the telephone book (this was back a few years). She saw a number for the Methodist manse and dialled the number. This was the closest thing she could recall that related to church. A man by the name of 'John Borman' answered and she burst into tears saying " I can't take it anymore'. He asked where she was and said he would be there in 10 minutes. – and he was.

The two sat in the lounge of her modest flat in Morningside, Durban, and Cheryl challenged the church minister to ask God why He was doing this to her and then to let her know. She was tired of fighting to cope so if His intent was to take her out could He please just get it over with. ''Go on ask him she said.''

He told her that faith did not work that way, so she called him a hypocrite. Surely, he could ask God. He asked if he could pray for her and when he did, said "Dear Lord get off her back she has had enough now". Horrified at the simplicity of his prayer she said – Can you speak to God like that? to which he replied - "anything from the heart is a prayer". He left a while later assuring her that he would continue to pray.

Within two weeks she got the news that the cancer had been caught within a millimetre from her bloodstream, her daughter's leg had been healed and she met her future husband. Now she knew that 'This God' had intervened

Cheryl and her husband Ivan Watson

in her life and healed her when she deserved to die. She wanted to know more about this incredible God.

This is the early beginnings of Cheryl's journey that has, at times, stripped her of all worldly possessions or positions – but through which she has gained deep, spiritual knowledge and understanding of our Lord and Saviour.

"And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit". (2 Corinthians 3:18) – is one of her favourite Scriptures.

Today, Cheryl Watson, a wife, mother, and grandmother, is a Christian powerhouse, author, a counsellor and a businesswoman. She has held positions such as church elder, bible college director and church trustee and has sat on many boards. She is a trained Lifeline counsellor, completed Bible College and more recently spoken as guest speaker at a woman's conference at the Awaken Church in Durban

as well as a woman's conference at Elim Church in Mbale Uganda.

Her story about how she slowly surrendered her life to Christ and what happened during this walk, is contained in her book called 'Broken Yet Chosen'. It is an authentic tale, written from the heart, in plain and simple text. It is easy reading and a story that everyone can relate to – especially those who have made mistakes, bad choices and found themselves on the wrong side of the fence.

Her discovery of God and her healing from cancer, was just the beginning of her path leading her to where she is today, having experienced many real-life encounters with our Lord and whose understanding of our Creator is deep.

She shared an anecdote with Woman of Faith magazine that tested her faith.

Years ago, the couple had purchased a piece of land further North of Durban at Sheffield Beach. They both had differing ideas of their future there. Cheryl's husband made it clear, this was where he wanted to retire - away from the crime and grime gripping the neighborhood, while Cheryl saw it as a long-term investment, loved her life and her home in Durban North. Situated conveniently three minutes from their business and a short drive every Sunday to her church in Pinetown where she was a trustee, director of the Bible College and part of the Eldership team, she was in no hurry to move.

Things changed when they were informed by the Homeowners Association that they needed them to either build or face penalties. Being in the financial world, Cheryl did her calculations and realized they would have to borrow to make up the shortfall required to build a new home. Her attempts to raise a loan from the bank brought no joy as she found out that they do not give loans to people over 60 years old – no matter what.

"I could not believe it. We had no debt, a 35-year history with the bank as well as two fully paid for properties. So, I looked for advice from some successful Christian businessmen as the Word says in Proverbs 15:22, ''It is wise to seek the counsel of many", she said. Despite never having been risk takers we took the advice and invested in a scheme naively thinking this was God making a way""

Jumping forward in time, on the day the builder broke ground, the couple received shocking news their investment had been frozen - it was a Ponzi scheme.

"We lost all our life savings, investments, everything", she said.

The incident was a true test of faith leading Cheryl to have many heart-to-heart discussions with our Lord – asking why He would allow this?

"I went to the office on a Saturday morning to have it out with God and I said, ''God your Word says if we give tithes and offerings, then you will rebuke the devourer on our behalf. We have tithed, we have offered, and we have helped many people etc. Why have you allowed this to happen?"

"And I remember clearly. He spoke to me and said - 'So do you think I owe you?"

Cheryl's daughter Richelle Storm, with her husband Bendan and children, Rourke and Brooklyn.

Cheryl with her lovely granddaughter Brooklyn.

I knew He did not owe me, definitely not but I did not understand. And He spelt it out to me. "Your faith has not been Me but in your good works, your tithes, and your offerings. Your confidence and trust have been in your portfolio and investments not in Me. You sought your advice from man and not Me and My Word. Now you will learn to hear and trust Me and Me alone".

So, what must we do? I asked. And He led me to 1 Chronicles 28:20 - David said to Solomon his son, 'Be strong and courageous and do the work. Do not be afraid or discouraged for the Lord God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you or forsake you until all the work for the service of the temple of the Lord is finished."

The builder's name was Solomon, so we knew we had to continue and trust God for the provision. We placed bibles in the foundations of the building.

It was a shocking and sobering time. The incident forced Cheryl and her husband to re-evaluate their faith and what it means to trust our Lord – which is what they did, resolving to remain committed to God and through sheer faith, slowly but surely, they managed to construct their new home, brick by brick.

All these experiences ultimately led her to write her book, which she describes as a simple act of obedience or 'Because God said so'.

As she writes in the introduction, "I do believe that this is a book of hope that will expose the incredible love that the Father, His Son, and the Holy Spirit have for the hurt and the broken who have made so many mistakes. It is a book that I hope will set many free from the bondage of past generational bloodlines and bad choices and prove that no one is beyond the mercy and grace of God".

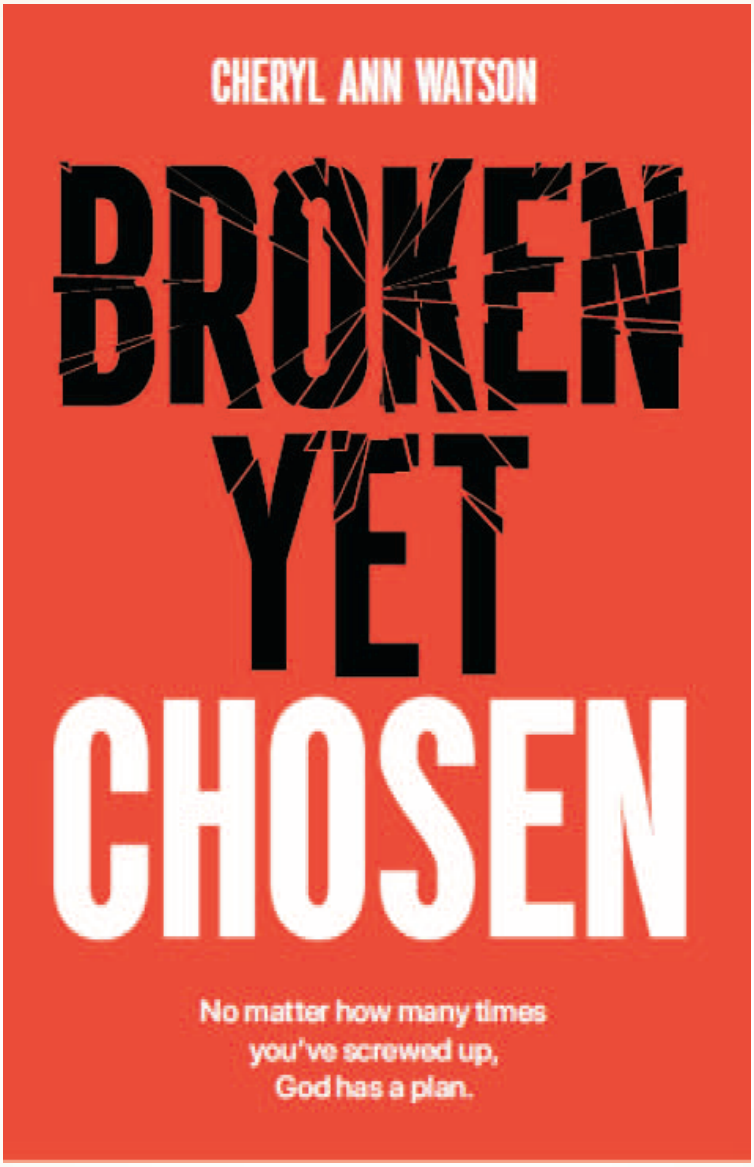
Built out of this desire to share her knowledge about God, Cheryl is already planning on bringing out a second one that will deal in depth about God's timing, the need to align ourselves with His calendar, an explanation about the Gospel in the sky (the constellations), His Seasons and more.

Cheryl and her husband currently attend Wave Church in Salt Rock. Her book is available on Takealot UK and on Amazon. It has been used as a Bible study and anyone wishing to get a copy can drop her an email: Here is her address: Cheryl.watson1958@gmail.com

Sweet Memories: Cheryl and Ivan Watson

"This book is a powerful testimony, a reminder that God's grace doesn't just meet us in our brokenness, it transforms us into something beautiful. Cheryl Watson's story is raw, real and filled with hope"

(Liz Naidoo, Editor. Woman of Faith Magazine.)



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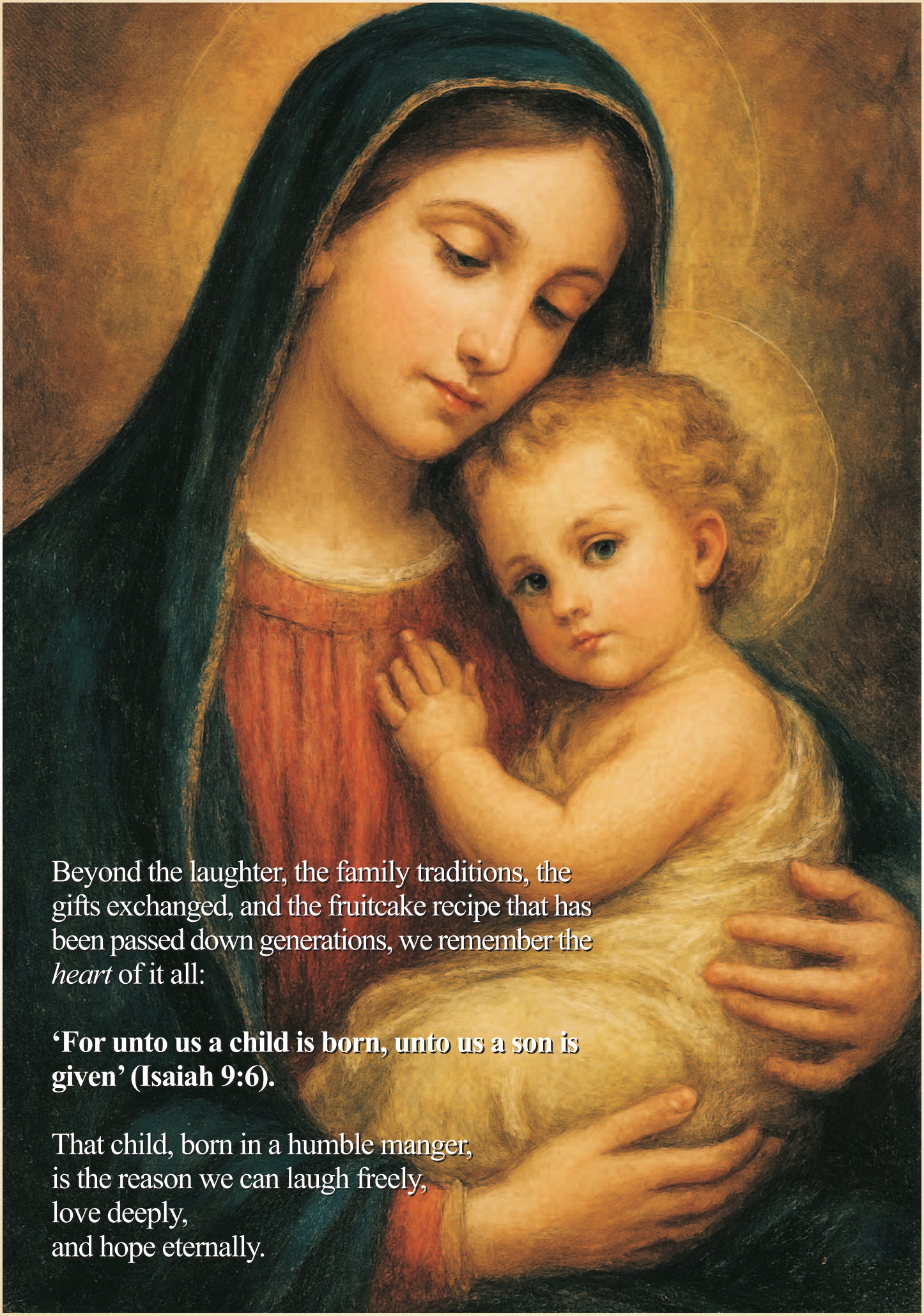
OR CONTACT CHERYL WATSON

Cheryl.watson1958@gmail.com



Beyond the laughter, the family traditions, the gifts exchanged, and the fruitcake recipe that has been passed down generations, we remember the *heart* of it all:

'For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given' (Isaiah 9:6).

That child, born in a humble manger,
is the reason we can laugh freely,
love deeply,
and hope eternally.

This Christmas Spread the Love of God Like Anything

Dr Suryya Kumar Daimari

In India, the Christmas season falls in winter. It's cold and it can freeze and snow basically in the Himalayan region in India. Yet, winter is dearly loved by people because, they connect Christmas to it and make it a joyful season. This connection transfers the potentially bleakest season into a period of joyful celebration. The landscape of the serene beauty of the winter season creates a canvas of tranquility that heightens the Christmas spirit.

Along with this spirit, in our land, Christmas is accompanied by a vibrant, nature-inspired folk dance called "Bagurumba" which is traditionally performed by the Bodo women in colorful traditional attire. "Bagurumba" means "butterfly". Thus, it's a butterfly dance, symbolic of harmony with nature. The theme is parallel to the Christmas message of peace on earth and harmony to the natural world. The symphony of festive sounds and the resilience of nature amplify the joyful sounds of Christmas, the Heavenly sound of music like, *silent night, holy night....* The spirit of Christmas truly comes to life through shared experiences and fellowship with family, friends and loved ones. The spirit of give and take relationship, togetherness brings a unique warmth of Christmas even in the coldest winter with a beacon of hope.

BUT WHAT IS CHRISTMAS?

Though the Christmas season is marked by festivities, traditions, along with a spirit of joy and goodwill, at the core of the heart, it's the love of God manifesting beyond its religious and traditional roots. Christmas is truly a time for spreading love, kindness, goodwill, and hope, especially to the needy and hungry. God's people have said about the spreading of God's love everywhere in the globe, **"Spread the love of God everywhere you go—because people need it now more than ever."** - J. Darryn Zewalk

"Spread the love of God through your life." -Mother Teresa

"Spread the love of God, because the world is already full of pain and suffering." Anonymous

"God's love is like an ocean; you can see it's beginning, but not it's end." Anonymous

These quotes are like pain balms or ointment that heal our pains and wounds - very relevant today in the wake of warfare and calamities across the world. God's love is always divine and sacrificial that saves a dying soul and gives life eternal.

God's wonderful love to mankind can be explored through the rich tapestry of metaphors or similes drawing from nature and explain the sublime spiritual concepts. The spreading of the love of God is liken to the colors spread across the sky, like in a rainbow or during sunrise or sunset. The meaning however is that there is action in love. God historically loved us and sent His only Son so that we can inherit the eternal life through Him, our Lord, Jesus Christ.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life"- John 3:16

Love is always vibrant, expansive, and reaches everyone bringing hope and renewal. God

Folk dance called "Bagurumba" which is traditionally performed by the Bodo women in colorful traditional attire. "Bagurumba" means "butterfly".

wants that everyone in this world should be reached out with love to inherit the eternal life. And this is the reason why Christ had commissioned his disciples to go to the whole world and preach the gospel of love to all mankind (Matthew 28:19).

Dr Sahil Naik in his article, **"Covid-19 spreads like Nuclear Chain Reaction...."**, established the fact that the dreaded bug of Pandemic Covid- 19 follows the Super Spreading Chain of Transmission from one person to another like a Nuclear fission chain reaction and reaches every nook and corner of this planet. According to him a single patient or career spreads this virus at least to three persons and subsequently these three persons to next nine persons and thus goes on. And we know how the Covid-19 covered the whole GLOBE within the span of few months crushing humanity to death. Interestingly, this chain of Covid-19 model is one hundred percent (100%) applicable to the Church today in spreading the love of God through the process of Disciple Making Continuum. But disciple making grows only out of love and compassion for one another.

"Behold, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent His only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we have loved God, but He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." 1John4:7-10 (ESV)

And this is real Christmas and the real message of Christmas.

The Pandemic Covid-19 took only a couple of months to spread the pandemic disease to every nook and corner of this globe. But how long will it take for us to spread the love of God to all mankind? Let us begin this invaluable task this **CHRISTMAS ! SPREAD THE LOVE OF GOD LIKE ANYTHING.**

"The people walking in darkness have seen a great light."

(Isaiah 9:2)

May the Light of Christ shine brightly in your celebrations, guiding you into a new year of hope.

Designing Women

Liz Naidoo

Entering the Secret Place

There is a sacred rhythm in life, a quiet corner where heart meets heaven. Scripture calls it *"the secret place of the Most High"* (Psalm 91:1). For many, this place is found in prayer, reflection, and written words from the heart. Journaling becomes more than ink on paper; it is a doorway into intimacy with God, a sanctuary for the soul, and a gift we leave behind for generations yet to come.

Journaling is essential for every Christian woman because it is ...

- **A Spiritual Anchor:** Journaling allows us to record prayers, revelations, and testimonies. It becomes a personal altar where we trace God's faithfulness.
- **A Mirror for Growth:** Writing helps us process emotions, celebrate victories, and learn from struggles. It is a gentle teacher, showing us how far we've come.
- **A Legacy of Faith:** Journals are not just for us, they are treasures for our children and grandchildren. Imagine a granddaughter opening her grandmother's journal and finding prayers written for her before she was born.

The Secret Place Journal is more than a notebook; it is a spiritual companion. Each page invites us to:

- **Pause:** Step away from the noise and enter stillness.
- **Reflect:** Write down the whispers of God, the lessons of the day, and the joys of the moment.
- **Remember:** Capture milestones, birthdays, breakthroughs, answered prayers, that future generations can cherish.

Journalling holds great benefits for Future Generations

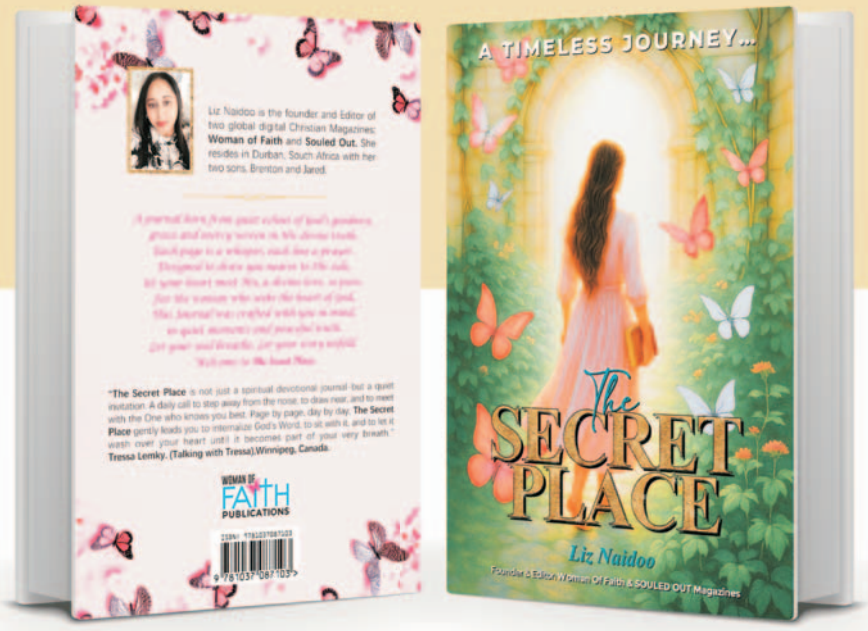
- **Preserving Testimonies:** Journals become living history, recording how faith carried us through trials.
- **Passing Down Wisdom:** They hold stories, scriptures, and lessons that guide those who come after us.
- **Creating Connection:** Reading a loved one's journal bridges time, allowing future generations to feel seen, prayed for, and loved.

Journaling is not about perfect words or polished sentences. It is about honesty, intimacy, and remembrance. Whether it's a scribbled prayer, a doodle in the margin, or a full page of reflection, every entry is a seed planted in the garden of memory.

The Secret Place Journal is a sanctuary in ink—a place where laughter, tears, and prayers are preserved. As we write, we not only nurture our own souls but also leave behind a legacy of faith, hope, and love. May our journals be lanterns that light the path for generations to come.

CONTACT ME FOR A COPY OF **THE SECRET PLACE**

info@womanoffaith.co.za or Call +27 83 312 9383


Liz Naidoo is the founder and Editor of two global digital Christian Magazines; Woman of Faith and Souled Out. She resides in Durban, South Africa with her two sons, Brenton and Jared.
"The Secret Place is not just a spiritual devotional journal-but a quiet invitation. A daily call to step away from the noise, to draw near, and to meet with the One who knows you best. Page by page, day by day, The Secret Place gently leads you to internalize God's Word, to sit with it, and to let it wash over your heart until it becomes part of your very breath." Tressa Lemky. (Talking with Tressa).Winnipeg, Canada.
WOMAN OF FAITH PUBLICATIONS
A TIMELESS JOURNEY...
The SECRET PLACE
Liz Naidoo
Founder & Editor Woman Of Faith & SOULED OUT Magazines

Datha Wilson Whitfield

FINDING MY PURPOSE

"First one to see the STAR wins"

It was just a silly little game, but when I was a little girl, it meant everything...because winning the game meant we were just moments away from the best gift ever.

"The moment the Star came into view, we knew we were only minutes away from absolute joy"

Growing up my dad's job moved our little family of four from state to state, but no matter where we lived, my parents always loaded us into the car and made the long trip to my grandparents' home in a tiny Mississippi town. Sometimes those drives stretched for hours and hours—sometimes late into the night. But we didn't mind. We had pillows and blankets, and me and my sister would build little beds in the backseat. The lucky one got the floorboard, which somehow seemed far more exciting than the entire seat. Still today I can feel the hum of the road beneath me, lulling me to sleep in my little nest.

But the *real* excitement happened the moment we arrived in town. Mom and Dad would make an announcement that caused us to squeal with excitement: **"First one to see the STAR wins!"**

A few steps from my grandparents' house stood the little grocery store—The Star Market—where my Maw-Maw Hazel bought her groceries and where Paw-Paw sent me with money for his Camel cigarettes and just enough left over for a candy bar and a cold Pepsi. And way up above that old store was a giant metal **STAR**, glowing like a beacon over the whole street.

Whoever spotted it first would shout, point, and claim victory, but the truth was...it didn't matter who won. The moment the Star came into view, we knew we were only minutes away from absolute joy—warm hugs, familiar smells, and the feeling of being home.

Maw-Maw Hazel, smelling like Jergens Original Lotion, would squeeze us tight before heading back to finish cooking all our favorites, mine was Chicken & dressing and homemade yeast rolls so soft and buttery I can still taste them. Paw-Paw had paper sacks filled with satsumas and candy. Aunt Scotta made a Christmas tin of rich chocolate fudge just for me. The yellow

glass cookie jar stayed filled to the brim. Presents were tucked into a big antique chest. The tree twinkled. Cousins ran wild. Uncles and aunts smothered us with hugs. And every single cousin argued over who got to sleep in Maw-Maw's bed. She would stay up late telling stories about her childhood, trying to recall the strange nicknames of her friends that always made us giggle. It was the most special time of my childhood...it was the *best gift.*

Looking back, I realize something I didn't understand then: That Star we searched for—high above The Star Market—was more than just a sign that we were almost home. It was a reminder of another Star...a Star that once hung in the sky marking the very place where Jesus lay. The Bible says:

"We saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him."
—Matthew 2:2

A heavenly announcement. A guiding light. A sign that hope had come.

The wise men didn't have maps, GPS, or road signs—they simply followed the light God placed before them. And that Star led them straight to Jesus.

"And the star they had seen in the east went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was."—Matthew 2:9

Just like those wise men, as a little girl, I was following a Star too...a Star leading me toward joy, peace, and the warmth of family. I didn't know it then, but I was being guided toward a place where love lived.

And isn't that exactly what Jesus does? He leads us...through dark nights, through long journeys, through twists in the road...right to Himself.

"I am the Light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life." —John 8:12

All these years later, the memory still moves me. Because the Star outside The Star Market was more than metal and bulbs. It was a symbol of arrival. A marker of joy. A sign that we were home.

Just as the Star of Bethlehem was a symbol of a promise kept.
God with us. God for us. Hope wrapped in swaddling clothes.

The wise men brought gifts to Jesus, but Jesus Himself was the gift.

The gift of light in darkness. Grace in our mess. Peace in our chaos.
A Savior in our world.

And now I see: Every time our car rolled into that little town, and I spotted that great big Star, I was, without knowing, living out the story of Christmas:

Following a light, finding joy, and arriving at the best gift of all.

Jesus still marks our way with light. He still guides. He still leads.
And if we follow Him, we always end up home.

Datha with her younger sister at her grandparents' home during Christmas. The matching dresses were gifts from her Maw-Maw.

https://dathawhitfieldcoaching.com/

It's About the Baby Born in a Manager!

As we tie the final bow on this Christmas Edition, may the joy of Christ's birth outshine even the brightest string of tangled fairy lights.

May your laughter be louder than the carols sung off key, your peace deeper than the queue at the mall, and your hope sturdier than that wobbly gingerbread house.

Thank you for joining us in these pages of faith, fun, and festive cheer. Until next time, may you find rest in His presence, delight in His promises, and just enough patience for those relatives who think fruitcake is a love language.

Merry Christmas from all of us at **Woman of Faith Magazine**, may your new year be filled with peace, purpose, and a few good belly laughs.

Amidst all the preparations and the family cheer, take a moment to remember… It's About the Baby Born in a Humble Manager!

Love and good cheer.

Liz and Team

" Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." (Joshua 1:9)

May God guide your steps this season and may the new year bring you every new opportunity.

May courage and faith guide your every step.

Woman Of Faith Magazine

Editor and team

wishes you every blessing and safe keeping.

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